

# TOBACCO RETAIL LICENSING

## Placer County Tobacco Prevention Program

### *What is it and how can it benefit my local community?*

In today's consumer-driven environment, it's not difficult to find a tobacco retailer in your immediate proximity. Tobacco products are sold in an array of businesses, including convenience stores, gas stations, pharmacies, and supermarkets. While retailers must abide by state regulation, these regulations are minimal and are not heavily enforced. This lack of surveillance is concerning for many reasons, most significantly the ability for minors to purchase tobacco products. To counter this and provide more effective monitoring of retailers, local governments are turning to tobacco retail licensing as a means to directly control the sale of tobacco products in their community.

#### **What is Tobacco Retail Licensing (TRL)?**

Under a local tobacco retail licensing law, the city or county government requires all businesses that sell tobacco products to obtain a license from the government in exchange for the privilege of selling these products. On an annual basis, retailers must fill out an application, pay a pre-determined fee, and meet any other requirements outlined in the ordinance. This fee allows for the retail licensing program to be self-financed, so all activity necessary to implement, administer, and maintain the licenses is fully funded by the money collected.

#### **How is Tobacco Retail Licensing Beneficial to the Community?**

A tobacco retail licensing policy not only ensures businesses comply with responsible retailing practices, but it provides local governments greater oversight over tobacco-related activity in their own community. They can oversee 1.) who can sell tobacco products, 2.) what type of products can be sold, and 3.) the penalty structure for illegally selling to minors. Tobacco retail licensing has also been used to promote other innovative policy solutions, such as limiting the density of retailers per city square mile, banning establishments in close proximity to schools, and imposing additional restrictions on the sale and promotion of certain types of tobacco products.



#### **What About Electronic Cigarettes?**

In California, the sale of e-cigarettes to minors has been prohibited since 2011; however beyond this law, e-cigarette sales is unregulated. Local cities and counties throughout the state have taken steps to ensure that e-cigarettes are regulated and monitored in their communities by including e-cigarettes in the definition of a tobacco product within their local tobacco retail licensing ordinance. By incorporating electronic cigarettes into the policy, retailers selling e-cigarettes must abide by the same requirements and penalty structure as those selling other tobacco products.

#### **Tobacco Retail Licensing in Placer County**

To date, there are no tobacco retail licensing ordinances within Placer County. The Placer County Tobacco Prevention Program is partnering with each jurisdiction throughout the county to discuss the benefits of establishing such an ordinance and examine whether a tobacco retail licensing policy would be appropriate for their community.

For more information about tobacco retail licensing or if you would like to collaborate on this initiative, please contact the Placer County Tobacco Prevention Program at (530) 889-7152 or [shagen@placer.ca.gov](mailto:shagen@placer.ca.gov).